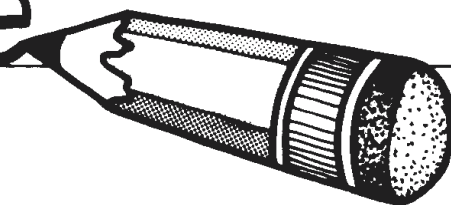


Parenting Pipeline

*A newsletter for parents of fourth-grade children
from Iowa State University Extension*



Hassle-Free Homework

Since your child has entered fourth grade, you've probably noticed a difference in the amount and type of homework he brings home. This homework extends your child's learning beyond the classroom.

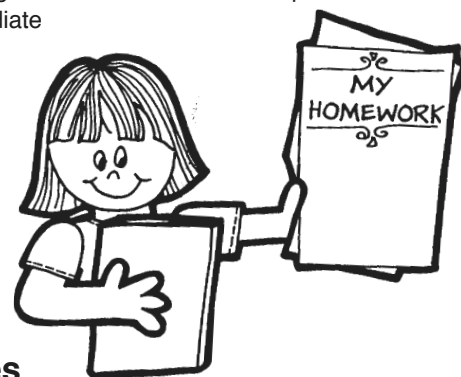
How Can I Help My Child With Homework?

Help your child develop a time clock. Children should be given time to unwind when they first get home from school or the child care provider. Sometimes after-school activities prevent doing any homework until after dinner. You and your child can determine when to set "homework time." You can help your child learn to include homework in her routine when you:

- Review your child's day.
- Preview the homework.
- Help your child review the assignments and estimate the time needed to complete each subject.
- Break large jobs into small steps. Have her do three math problems first before tackling the rest of the math assignment.
- Show her how to do things rather than doing them for her.
- Answer questions.
- Offer help only after your child has tried alone.
- Allow time for breaks.
- Establish a study area or place to do homework.
- Establish a routine. Homework should be done at the same time each day.
- Locate homework supplies in a specific area such as a desk or hall closet. Place the contents of a homework survival kit in a box or storage container that can easily be placed on a desk, table or floor.

Homework Survival Kit

pencils - pens - colored pencils - crayons - markers - pencil sharpener - erasers - glue or glue sticks - tape - writing paper - construction paper - hole punch - stapler - scissors - paper clips - white out - assignment book - folders for reports - index cards - intermediate dictionary - atlas - thesaurus - almanac - rubber bands



Learning Styles

Some children learn best by seeing (visual learners), some by hearing (auditory learners), some through movement and doing (kinesthetic learners). Most children are talented in one or two but not all three areas. Each child in your family will have his own learning style.

Material should be presented in a variety of ways to accommodate students' different learning styles. For example, if new spelling words are presented by calling out the letters, visual learners are not able to "picture" the word. If, however, they are printed on a blackboard in addition to being said aloud, visual learners see the way the word looks so they remember it more easily. Kinesthetic learners might have to manipulate blocks with letters to "make" the word before they can remember it.

Visual Learning

Spelling and math often come easily for visual learners because they can "see" the word or problem. They are generally neat and care about how things look. They learn by watching and will call up images from the past when trying to remember. They use visual imaging to picture the way things will look. Help them make mental pictures in their heads and use visual words to describe shape, form, color or size. Visual learners enjoy movies, museums, charts, maps and graphs. Encourage them to imagine what things look like. This will increase their ability to remember.

Summary of Learning Differences

	Kinesthetic	Auditory	Visual
Learning style	Learns by doing, direct involvement.	Learns through verbal instruction, either from others or self.	Learns by seeing; watches demonstrations.
Memory	Remembers best what was done, seen or talked about. May take notes and not look at them.	Remembers names, forgets faces; remembers by auditory repetition.	Remembers faces, forgets names; writes things down. Takes notes and looks at them.
Problem solving	Attacks problem physically; impulsive; often selects solutions involving greatest activity.	Talks problems out; tries solutions verbally, subvocally; talks self through problem.	Deliberate; plans in advance; organizes thoughts by writing them; lists problems.
Communication	Gestures when speaking; does not listen well; stands close while speaking or listening.	Enjoys listening but cannot wait to talk; descriptions are long and repetitive.	Quiet; does not talk at length; becomes impatient when extensive listening is required.
Language	Uses words such as <i>get, take, make, etc.</i>	Uses words such as <i>listen, hear, tell, etc.</i>	Uses words such as <i>see, look, watch, etc.</i>

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Auditory Learning

Auditory learners learn best by listening. They often spell a word the way it sounds rather than as they saw it in print. They may have trouble with reading because they do not visualize well. Some auditory learners have conversations aloud with themselves or others. They like to talk things over, and they do well when people contribute verbally in small or large groups (debates, plays). This type of learner enjoys imagining how things will sound and remembers facts best when they are presented in a poem or song.

Kinesthetic Learning

Kinesthetic learners learn by doing. They learn best through movement and manipulation. They like to find out how things work and are very successful in the practical arts. When given a choice of assignments, such as writing a book report or making a scene from a book, they will make the scene. They can learn to read and follow directions through the use of recipes, etc. Most kinesthetic learners move around a lot (rock in chair, tap feet) and have trouble sitting for long periods. They like to dance, participate in sports and use their hands. They may even like the feel of fabric rather than the look of the clothes they wear. This explains why they like to study on a carpet or textured bedspread. Although it might appear distracting, they may have to walk around while doing their homework assignment. They are also very sensitive to feelings in themselves and others.

What Parents Can Do To Help

Assist in establishing study habits and a study place.

Help by practicing skills through activities and play.
Help with memory work. Drill or review by calling out words or questions and by listening to recitation.

Help your child learn where to find information — books, newspapers, magazines. Go to the library together regularly.

Offer ideas for projects related to school studies. Let your child talk ideas over with you.

Review completed homework, and discuss it with your child. Encourage her to share what has been learned.

Encourage *all* efforts and praise the things your child does well. Don't dwell on shortcomings.

Your involvement does take time and effort. However, most parents report that when they are involved in their child's school and homework, their child enjoys school and gets along better with teachers and peers. Your child may improve her grades and develop a positive attitude about school, education and the future. This does not mean your child will not experience disappointments and failure from time to time. We all do. Failure can be absorbed if there are plenty of experiences with success. Realistic expectations on your part as a parent will result in a greater sense of pride and achievement for your child.

Adapted for use in Iowa from Parenting Pipeline, North Dakota State University Extension Service, by Donna K. Donald, family life field specialist, Iowa State University Extension.

This newsletter is published for families with fourth-grade children by Iowa State University Extension. For more information about parenting education, contact your local county extension office or access the Iowa State University Extension to Families website, www.extension.iastate.edu/families.

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